



JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

HEBREWS READING GUIDE

WEEK 13



JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

WEEK 13
APRIL 17, 2023



CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

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EVERY DAY ...

... A PASSAGE TO READ,

... SOME COMMENTS TO CONSIDER,

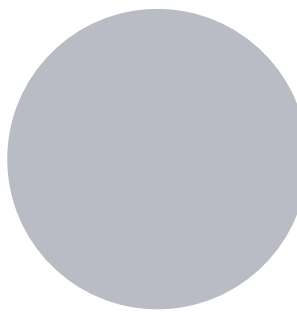
... THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK,

... A PRAYER TO PRAY.




WEEK 13

HEBREWS 7:18-8:13



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DAY 1 FULLY KNOWN AND FULLY LOVED

First read Hebrews 7:18-24.

Intimacy can be frightening. Yet we long for it. We want relationships in which we're fully known and fully loved. Both the law and the priesthood were meant to cultivate intimacy with God. But neither was meant to be permanent. This is actually really good news because **"the law made nothing perfect"** (v.19a). Sin works in opposition to divine intimacy. Because of God's holiness, we can't draw near.

David taught Israel to sing, **"For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you"** (Psalm 5:4). Sin makes us unclean. Sin makes us undone. And the law and earthly priests only make us more aware of our brokenness (see Romans 3:19-20). In other words, the law may know us but doesn't love us.

Hebrews teaches us that both the law and the priesthood were meant to point us to Christ, through whom we have **"a better hope"** (v.19b). It's better because Christ comes with a promise and a divine nature. The writer concludes, **"This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant"** (v.22). The law exposes sin, but Jesus forgives sin. Earthly priests make sacrifices, but Jesus makes us new.

This means we can have real intimacy with God. Because in Christ, we're fully known and fully loved, forever (v.24).

DAY 1 FULLY KNOWN AND FULLY LOVED

1. What does intimacy with God teach us about his character and nature?
2. What fears or shame keep you from enjoying intimacy with God? How about with others?
3. How does this passage give you a better hope?

Heavenly Father ...

Sometimes I feel like I don't want to be or belong in your presence. And so I stay far from your Word, your people, and thoughts of you. Shame and fear have taught me that I can only be with you when I'm good. But that's not true. Your Son makes me new. Your Son gives me a better hope. Your Son tells me that I'm secure and safe and at peace in your presence. Help me to believe this truth today ... that I'm known and loved.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 2

A HAPPY MEDIATION

First read Hebrews 7:25-28.

Mediation is about reconciliation. When two parties are at odds with each other they entrust their discord to the objectivity of a third party. Both sides trust a mediator who they believe will genuinely represent their interests and reconcile differences at a minimal cost. This is really hard work. Rarely is this a pleasant process in friendship and certainly not in legal proceedings.

The Bible talks about a spiritual mediation that is necessary for salvation. Sin puts humanity at odds with God. Fortunately, the writer of Hebrews tells us Jesus ***“is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him”*** (v.25). Jesus brings a happy mediation between God and people. You see, because of his weakness, Jesus is a wonderful mediator on our behalf (see 4:15). But because of his perfection, he’s also the ideal intercessor from the Heavenly Father’s vantage point (v.25,28). Jesus genuinely knows our needs because he was like us in every way yet without sin (see 4:15). Jesus also genuinely knows the Father’s holiness.

This is why Paul told his young protege, Timothy, ***“there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”*** (1 Timothy 2:5). His solution, which holds both parties' interests in perfect tension, is that ***“he offered up himself”*** (v.27b). Our sins are forgiven. God’s glory is upheld. Reconciliation is achieved.

DAY 2

A HAPPY MEDIATION

1. What does Jesus' mediation teach us about the love of the Father? What about his justice?
2. Do you trust Jesus' mediatorial work on your behalf? Why or why not?
3. How ought this gospel mediation shape our reconciliation efforts in earthly relationships?

Heavenly Father ...

Thank you for the gift of your Son. Without his perfect mediation, I could not draw near to you. Through him, I am reconciled with you forever. Help me to be a minister of reconciliation today.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 3 AN ONGOING PROCESS OF HELP AND HEALING

First read Hebrews 8:1-2.

For generations, Christians have advocated for the unborn. Yet, many Christians have also been compelled to advocate for the women who carry the unborn. Both see undue vulnerability. At the risk of oversimplification, the only way to reconcile this tension is to acknowledge the image of God in persons, as we say, *from the womb to the tomb* (see Genesis 1:27). We should be about the good of the unborn and the already born. Because advocacy isn't simply an event in time but an ongoing process.

We often think about where Jesus was and what he did. Rarely do we give equal consideration to where he is and what he's doing now. Hebrews' preacher speaks to this very thing. He says Jesus is on a throne, in heaven, in the holy places, and in the true tent (v.1,2). He's with his Father. He's right next to him. This tells us that Jesus didn't advocate for us once. He is ***"seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven"*** where he continues to intercede for us (v.1 b, see Romans 8:34). While Jesus sacrificed himself in a singular act in history, ***"he always lives to make intercession for"*** his people (7:25).

How should this reality change the way we advocate and intercede for others? Perhaps it won't solve the abortion debate or other tensions we face. But it ought to at least encourage us to see advocacy not just as an event, but as an ongoing process. The psalmist captures it best when he sings, ***"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"*** (Psalm 46:1). Advocacy isn't just an event. It's an ongoing process of help and healing. That's the kind of advocate we have in Christ.

DAY 3

AN ONGOING PROCESS OF HELP AND HEALING

1. Why should Jesus' location (where he is) give us confidence in his vocation (what he's doing)?
2. How is Jesus helping and healing you right now?
3. Who is the Lord inviting you to help right now? How has he equipped you to bring healing to them?

Heavenly Father ...

We all need your help and healing. Left to ourselves, we mistreat those who bear your image. Thank you for the way you love with dignity and power, through the ongoing and daily advocacy of your Son.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 4 STARTING WITH THE ENDING

First read Hebrews 8:3-7.

Many authors write their endings first. They resolve every tension before any tension is created. It might seem odd, working backward, until we consider the process more deeply. One *Master Class* writer explained, “Knowing the outcome will help you drop narrative clues—but no spoilers—so a reader can easily accept the outcome when they reach the last page” (November 16, 2021).

In a very real sense, that’s what God has done with respect to our redemption—he wrote the ending first. While the first covenant is about the blessing and law God gives Abraham and Moses, the second is about the fulfillment of Jesus (see John 1:17). The first covenant was not “faultless” on purpose; Hebrews says it was all **“a copy and shadow of the heavenly things”** (vv.5,7). That’s because the second covenant was always in God’s mind. The first was built only after the second was agreed upon.

Theologians call this *the redemptive covenant*. Before time, the Trinity agreed on the way every tension would be resolved before any tension showed up. That’s the promise Hebrews keeps talking about. Jesus is not a backup plan nor a do-over. Jesus was the ending God started with. That’s not working backward necessarily, that’s how everything points forward, helping us see and savor God’s gracious outcome.

DAY 4 STARTING WITH THE ENDING

1. What does knowing that God started with our full redemption in mind teach us about his providence?
2. How does this increase your faith and trust in him?
3. What areas of your life or situations do you need to trust the Lord with right now?

Heavenly Father ...

You are great and you do great things. As I look at history and redemption I see your power, faithfulness, and love. Help me to rest assured in you today.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 5

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

First read Hebrews 7:8-13.

Perhaps the most succinct comparison of the old and new covenants in the Bible is written by the Apostle John. In the opening of his gospel account, John says, ***“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”*** (John 1:17). This is a relative contrast. After all, during the old covenant God was gracious and true. And in the new covenant, the Holy Spirit enables us to obey God’s moral law.

Quoting Jeremiah, Hebrews even says, ***“I will put my law into their minds, and write them on their hearts”*** (v.10a). Even though the new covenant makes the old “obsolete,” there’s continuity (v.13). It's the same but different. What’s more, a primary element of the first covenant was identity, belonging, and family. This too is still fundamental in the second covenant. Because of God’s love, he’s always promised, ***“I will be their God, and they shall be my people”*** (10b).

It’s a common error to view the God of the old covenant differently from the God of the new. The writer of Hebrews invites us to step back and behold the masterpiece of the Lord’s ageless character through these two covenants. To be sure we see progress in his work through history, but we also realize he is ***“the same yesterday and today and forever”*** (Hebrews 13:8).

DAY 5


THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

1. What do you notice about God in this passage?
2. What do you think it means to have the law put in your mind and written on your heart?
3. How do the death and resurrection remind us of something old yet also teach us something new about God?

Heavenly Father ...

(Silently reflect on God's faithfulness and give him thanks.)

In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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